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SUBJECT: HLTF: GUIDANCE FOR MARCH 12 MEETING

REF: (A) STATE 7036 - January 29 HLTF Guidance Cable, (B)  
USNATO 52 ? January 29 HLTF Reporting Cable, (C) HLTF-  
A(2009)0002(INV) PROPOSED AGENDA FOR MAR 12

Classified by Donna Phelan, VCI/CCA Acting Office  
Director, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) The March 12 High Level Task Force (HLTF) meeting will take place on the heels of the NATO Foreign Ministerial and Secretary Clinton's bilateral meeting with FM Lavrov in Geneva. Discussion will center on a CFE "stocktaking" exercise (called for by Turkey at the January 29 HLTF) and preparations for the 60th Anniversary Summit, specifically agreeing on themes for the Alliance message on CFE to include in the communique. Regarding the way ahead, we expect the focus to be on how best to shape FM Steinmeier's proposal for a June 10 senior-level seminar in Berlin on conventional arms control. As the new administration continues to review plans for addressing the CFE impasse in the context of broader proposals on European security, we will want to ensure that the format and substance are well-prepared, so we can advance a unified and constructive message.

Primary U.S. goals for the March 12 HLTF and related meetings are to:

- continue to emphasize that our priority remains to sustain a unified NATO position and deliver a consistent message on CFE that encourages Russia to engage constructively on CFE;
- support a solid and consistent message on CFE for the upcoming NATO Summit in April;
- encourage Allies to work toward consensus on how we can best structure the Steinmeier-proposed senior-level seminar to support the broader negotiating effort;
- seek clarification from the Germans on the concepts underlying the German paper and how these might differ from the rationale behind the current Alliance approach, e.g. on the flank; and
- finalize the HLTF input for the draft report to the SPC on "Raising NATO's Profile in the field of Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-proliferation." HLTF-N (2009)0002-REV6 (INV).

CONTACTS and BILATERALS.

¶2. (C) Allies will be keen for a read out of Secretary Clinton's March 6 meeting with FM Lavrov in Geneva as it pertains to CFE. Most should already have a readout of the briefing provided by EUR A/S Fried on March 9.

-- U.S. rep may indicate that CFE was briefly discussed by Secretary Clinton and Minister Lavrov. Lavrov raised the issue, citing the Russian view that the "parallel actions" approach advanced in Moscow in October 2007 had been a good basis for work, but that the U.S. had

stepped back from that approach in the period since. The Secretary expressed U.S. readiness to work to resolve the current impasse. The exchange on CFE was brief, since the meeting encompassed the full range of U.S.-Russia bi-lateral and multi-lateral issues.

#### CFE "STOCKTAKING"

13. (C) At the January 29 HLTF, Allies agreed to Turkey's proposal ? aimed at stabilizing the current approach on CFE during the U.S. transition by mitigating the possibility of any Ally promoting alternative paths in the near term ? to use the next HLTF as an opportunity to engage in a CFE "stocktaking" discussion (that is not/not intended to involve any papers or written assessments). As appropriate, U.S. rep may draw on the following to stress that the focus, for now, should be for Allies to remain on-message in encouraging Russia to engage on CFE:

-- The HLTF input for the draft report to the SPC developed by the HLTF-Deputies since the last HLTF provides a solid review of where we are on CFE and the key events that led us to this point.

-- The Russians have identified CFE as an area on which they would like to work with the new Administration to find a way forward. The U.S. is committed to engaging Russia on arms control. The Parallel Actions Package remains on the table. The new team will need time to organize, however, and the timeline of a next U.S.-Russian discussion on CFE is not yet decided.

-- The main lines of NATO policy on CFE ? stressing our commitment to the CFE regime and support for the Parallel Actions Package as the way ahead ? remain valid. At this point, our agreed aims would be served best by maintaining a proactive approach that solidly demonstrates NATO unity and does not risk complicating the possibility of reaching agreement on the Parallel Actions Package.

-- Allies should direct a clear message at Russia stressing that resolving the CFE impasse depends on Russia's willingness to engage seriously and constructively on a way forward on CFE.

-- We agree with Allies that CFE is a critical element of Europe's security architecture, a point that is particularly significant in light of Russia's continued diplomatic push for a new, yet still ambiguous, European Security Treaty. This point was highlighted in the NATO SYG's comments on NATO-Russia issues following the Foreign Ministerial.

-- In the context of President Medvedev's European Security Treaty proposal recently addressed by DFM Grushko at the OSCE, Russia has clearly indicated that in terms of disarmament and arms control Russia has no intention of replacing the CFE Treaty (as well as the Open Skies Treaty and Vienna Document 1999.) NATO Allies should capitalize on this assurance by urging Russia to follow up on this message through productive engagement on CFE.

-- Part of our message should underscore that we agree with Russia that arms control regimes play a key role in strengthening European security and are confident that existing mechanisms within the Euro-Atlantic security system, when implemented fully, provide for a comprehensive approach to security that benefits all of us.

#### PREPARATIONS FOR NATO SUMMIT IN APRIL

14. (C) Allies indicated at the previous HLTF strong support for including CFE language in the communique that sends a message to Russia, and others, that NATO

continues to attach great importance to CFE. We agree with Allies that the December Ministerial language is appropriate and balanced, and should serve as the basis for CFE language in April, barring any major developments diplomatically or on the ground. At this stage, U.S. rep should urge the I.S. to circulate soonest a draft text which draws from the balanced message of the Bucharest Summit and December Ministerial communiques. Our aim should be to preserve the right balance between positive themes: NATO's commitment to CFE and readiness to work with Russia to solve the current impasse and reiteration of basic positions of principle regarding territorial integrity and host-nation consent for the presence of military forces.

#### GERMAN SEMINAR ON THE FUTURE OF ARMS CONTROL IN EUROPE

15. (C) Germany assured Allies that there would be several rounds of "negotiations and consultations" with Allies to develop the goals and objectives for its June 10 seminar in Berlin on "The Future of Conventional Arms Control in Europe." Germany initially shared with the U.S. (and the UK and France) a paper of the same title characterizing its concept and goals for this meeting. The U.S. raised a number of concerns with some of the more far-reaching aspects of this paper on the margins of the January 29 HLTF, and Germany indicated a willingness to discuss it at senior levels before circulating. Instead, Germany distributed a paper, which closely resembles its original form, via HLTF-Deputies on March 5. The German Embassy in Washington has stressed that we should view this document as a vehicle for shaping the conference. The U.S. rep should raise the following points on the margins and in the HLTF, as appropriate, with the intent of shaping the seminar and focusing its objectives:

-- Germany's proposal for a senior-level seminar on CFE usefully focuses the need for priority attention to conventional arms control. We will need to shape the agenda for the meeting to support ongoing efforts on CFE as well as broader discussions on European security.

-- NATO Allies will need to agree on a common objective and goals for the meeting.

-- As we prepare for the seminar and form common goals, we are interested in others' views on the current approach on CFE, ideas for enhancing efforts and for how best to shape this upcoming seminar.

-- We welcome discussion of the role of conventional arms control in the current Euro-Atlantic security environment as called for in the paper. As the new U.S. administration has made clear on Russia's European Security Treaty proposal, we are ready to talk about the concerns and challenges to the current security architecture, but we should not allow existing principles or institutions to be undermined.

-- We are particularly interested in learning what Germany's intended outcome for the seminar is considering the ambitious agenda of the paper, and the intended broad audience. What goals should the Alliance have for the seminar? How does Germany intend to engage in further discussions with Allies on shaping the seminar to serve those goals? And what are German intentions for moving forward with seminar planning as far as distributing the paper more widely than the HLTF?

-- The German paper appears to suggest defining the "scope and parameters" of future changes to the Adapted Treaty. A decision to identify specific areas for renegotiation of the Adapted Treaty would require decisions at the highest levels of NATO governments. To identify those areas where the Treaty would likely be amended in advance of ratification of the Adapted Treaty could seriously complicate prospects for ratification of

the current Adapted Treaty (as signed at Istanbul). We would be interested in Allies' assessment on this point.

-- As we work on seminar planning, we need be careful in characterizing the urgency of the current CFE situation. We agree it is a priority issue that requires active engagement. But the status of the Treaty will not change materially, unless either Russia withdraws from the regime, or NATO Allies stop implementing. The Alliance has maintained a measured and balanced approach successfully, and this deliberate process is one that will continue to serve our goals best. We do not want fears of imminent disaster to lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy.

-- Additionally, the notion that only Russia's concerns are at the core of the "crisis" misleads the reader. It takes no account of the damage done to CFE by Russia's suspension, while suggesting that the current situation is one-sided and that our current approach does not address Russia's concerns. Neither is accurate as our efforts have centered on a comprehensive approach that addresses the concerns of all States Parties and not just one.

--We would appreciate clarification of some of the concepts behind the German paper, in particular the division between "strategic" and "regional".

-- It appears that the greatest challenge to stability, and thus to the strategic relationship, is no longer in Central Europe but on the northern and southern flank. Is the flank issue considered "regional" or "strategic?"

-- How does the German concept deal with the flank regime, in particular, reciprocal restraint in the numbers of deployed forces on both sides of Russian northern and southern borders?

-- How does the German concept deal with the principle of host nation consent to the presence of foreign forces? Does the German approach assume a prior resolution in this area in A/CFE?

-- How might new CSBMs contribute to preventing misunderstanding or enhancing early warning of conflicts such as occurred in Georgia?

-- How would new measures solve the problem of potentially effective agreed measures, such as Vienna Document and CFE inspections, which been refused in the Caucasus for a variety of reasons?

"RAISING NATO'S PROFILE IN THE FIELD OF ARMS CONTROL, DISARMAMENT AND NON-PROLIFERATION."

16. (C) Since the last HLTF, the HLTF Deputies have been working on the HLTF input for the draft report to the SPC on "Raising NATO's Profile in the field of Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-proliferation." The document has undergone a number of revisions in an effort to ensure its accuracy and to focus the paper more coherently. The latest version (HLTF-N(2009)0002-REV6 (INV)) which is based on a Chairman's proposal and incorporates most of our input will be reviewed and finalized at the HLTF. U.S. rep should seek agreement on a final text based on the Chairman's proposal with minimal edits as agreed by the I/A. U.S. rep should also note we appreciate efforts to work the CFE portion of this report and look forward to reviewing this language in the context of the whole document.

DATE OF NEXT HLTF MEETING

17. (SBU) There will certainly be a need for at least one HLTF following the April Summit and prior to the German seminar in June. HLTF rep should support a meeting in early May, noting that an additional meeting can be

scheduled if warranted.

CLINTON